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classes and societies, and the church and its social groups to which he is eligible. But those of us who have attended conferences know that the boy thinks in no small measure of that voluntary community group of his fellows known as the Young Men's Christian Association, organized on a Christian basis and primarily for Christian service, when he says that he is going back to help the fellows and get others to do the same. Then when he gets home to find that the group has disbanded and the fellows are more or less organized about other interests, not primarily with a religious purpose, the youthful delegate may be confronted by an experience not altogether unlike the temptation of the wilderness or the return from the Mount of Transfiguration.

None would deny, however, the tremendous opportunity the boy has of giving expression to his enthusiasm in the new activities and interests of the spring and summer seasons and in the more permanent organizations of the community. Our proposition resolves itself into a question of the best time.

Is it not, therefore, the part of wisdom for our county organizations to make their supreme effort at inspiring the hypersensitive youth for service at a time in the year's program when they afford him the greatest opportunity to give expression to the desire created? Thus we conserve as well as create, and tend to avoid lapses of religious emotion, with its conference-hardened boys and mature religious derelicts. Moreover, the communities and the county would receive a larger benefit from the conference, as our committeeman would put the matter. Things would happen, because boys want to do them and have the opportunity. Old groupings would be revitalized with definite Christian service and new ones would crystallize about the higher interest.

The crux of the matter rests on whether decision for the Christian life, church membership, etc., are ends in themselves, or means to larger ends; whether the Christian life is a static affair or a constant achieving process. With the former view, the time of the year and the place in the county work program are of little consequence, but with the latter they are all important considerations.

None would gainsay that a conference should be held. The resultant enlarged outlook and Christian attitude and behavior in the lives of the delegates, which leaven individuals and social groups of all kinds and dimensions amply justify the continuance of the county older boys' gathering.

For the most part boy workers are agreed that boys' meetings should, as much as possible, be arranged for, conducted, and followed up by the boys themselves. Adults are to act as counsellors, guides and leaders. The conference should be by, as well as for, the boys.

Further, the conference should have a sense of being a representative body delegated by groups, communities, and the county to act for them. The point of view of the conference all along the line from preparations for it through the follow up work should be this home group, community, and county and their needs. This means not only the community-sent delegates but a community response upon their return.

As to the why and how of a conference, we therefore are taking it for granted that there is a pretty general agreement among county sec-

retaries. We hope the same holds true as to the when. In any case, we in our own county thought the time was of considerable importance, as is implied in the foregoing discussion. In Michigan the State Boys' Conference is held during the Thanksgiving vacation. The nearness of this event and the youth of the groups precludes a conference in the fall. Therefore, the middle or latter part of January seemed the most fitting time for a conference. The groups are well under way and may serve as a direct means for conserving the results.

It may be that in some counties a conference might be held to the best advantage nearer the beginning of the year. But to our way of thinking, the conference at the end of the group year is very much at a disadvantage in making use of what it has generated. We have the right to stir up enthusiasm, if we make possible ample opportunity for expression.

As a final word, we believe that it should be axiomatic that every phase, feature, and event of our County Work program should not be an end but a means to a larger end. When we are dealing with boys, that larger end should not be too remote. This is the reason why we, in our county now are holding our County Boys' Conference in the middle instead of the end of the group year. The after results are more important than the things which happen at the conference.

Tribal Life in South Africa

BY SIMBINI NKOMO

Secretary of the African Student Christian Association, Greenville, Ill.

A graduate of Greenville College, Illinois, and a native of Southern Rhodesia, South Africa, the author expects soon to return to his own people, of whom there are a million, to bring to them the message of Christianity, education, and modern agriculture. All of his brothers and sisters he has led into an acceptance of Christ, and two of them are now preparing for Christian work in their native land.—THE EDITOR.

THE people in our country believe that there is one God only and that His name is Msikabantu, meaning the driller of men or Creator. He created men from the dust of the wood. He molded both man and woman on the same day and told them to increase and fill the earth. This God created black man only. He gives us rain, he makes trees grow and makes our crops grow. He possesses much power over all things and has power to punish those who violate His laws. The storms, thunders, lions, and snakes are used by Him in punishing the evildoers. When people want rain they give many presents to the priests and ask them to forward them or dedicate them to the Creator, who will send rain on earth in return. Many times heavy rains follow these ceremonies. If it does rain the faith of the people is strengthened, but if it fails to rain the people believe that they must have done something wrong toward their God.

Worship.—The people believe strongly in ancestor-worship. They believe in the immortality of the soul. When a person dies his soul lives forever, and becomes more powerful to protect those who are living, from danger and death. To please the spirits of the dead much sacrifice is

made every year. The sacrifice is composed of cows, potatoes, corn, *Amabele, Umugoza,* mealies, goat, sheep, beautiful ornaments, blankets, plates, tobacco, and beer. The witch-doctors are consulted in regard to their wills. There are home spirits, or family, local, district and national spirits. No person is allowed to touch a new crop before it is offered to the spirits of the district. Violation of this law is followed by a terrible punishment. The children are used in giving or performing these services, and in this way they get their religious lessons.

Marriage.—Polygamy is quite common in that part of the country. We are more satisfied to have more than one wife. Each wife is paid for, the price ranging from $150 even to $1,000 for one. Instead of money, cattle is used in getting wives. The African girl is very sad if she knows that her husband did not pay for her when he took her in marriage. The boy courts any girl he wants and if she consents to marry him, then his father will arrange the marriage affairs. The reason for plural marriage is the desire to have a high social standing before the community. A man will have more food cooked for him. When one wife is sick there will be no possibility of losing his meals and employing a nurse. Other motives are a desire to have many children that will protect him from the outside enemy, and the ambition to have lots of women around him.

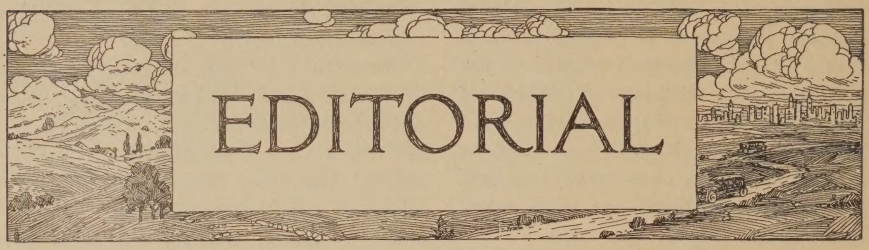
Birth.—The old women are entrusted with the care of the child-bearing young women. The male doctors are not allowed to do that kind of business. The mother, father, or grandfather gives the name to the child seven days after its birth. The name given often suggests something of superior quality or character; for example, Dabulamanzi, meaning cross water or one who is able to overcome difficulties, Umandhlokazi, meaning much strength. The girls' names are different from the boys', since they suggest beauty in their substance. Jubadeya means look and be satisfied, or how beautiful do I look?

Law and Customs.—When two men are playing and one happens to knock out another fellow's eyes, if they go to law the case will be dismissed on the ground that they were just playing when an accident happened. If you shoot a person without intention to do so you are not guilty. If you are found in sin with another man's wife the husband has the right to kill both man and woman. If a young man spoils someone's daughter before marriage he is compelled to marry her or suffer death. If a dog climbs on the housetop, its ears are cut off lest the owner of the house should die. If a person becomes a thief and steals cattle, his ears are cut off as an everlasting sign of his works. The men and women do not eat together, as a rule. When one meets his mother-in-law on the street he should step off from the street and kneel down and let her pass. The children are taught these lessons through story-telling and fables. The men build houses while the women plaster them. People are buried near their homes to show the respect and love for the dead. A death is followed by wailing on the part of all the people in the community.

Occupation and Sports.—Both men and women till the soil. The children weed the cornfields, etc. The men manufacture hoes, guns, spears, gunpowder, arrows and salt. They hunt, fish and make baskets. *Farming is their chief occupation.* For their play

they dance, run, jump, swim, and engage in sham fights and wrestling. The women make pots, blankets and dishes, they cook, hoe, spin, and teach the girls what they should learn about housework. They also make dolls. Their sports are for the most part wrestling, swimming, running and jumping.

These are just the customs of my people, among whom I am anxious to go and work. There are several missionaries working among them, yet great numbers of them have not yet been reached.



War Americanization

A national plan that has been in process of formation for several months has been carefully worked out in consultation with Federal officials, representatives of national organizations, and school authorities. The aim of this campaign will be directed toward stimulating the acquisition of the English language by all immigrants, and toward inspiring a genuine allegiance to the United States on the part of all citizens. The U. S. Bureau of Education, under whose inspiration and direction this campaign is to be waged, announces that approximately three million foreign-born whites reside in the United States, who do not speak English. Concerted effort is to be made to induce these immigrants to learn English, and to acquire a knowledge of the Government, the institutions, and the ideals of the United States. America's part in the war and the obligation of an immigrant to the country during the war, officials of the Bureau believe, should be made clear to all who can in any wise be reached. Here is another war-work opportunity in our villages and in the rural areas, to do a fine piece of constructive work by getting into sympathetic personal touch with such individuals as we know come under this head. No doubt much of this work will need to be done in a personal way and from a rural point of view. Not too much can be left to mass effort. Certainly our County Committees and County Secretaries will be ready to make a survey of the situation and to meet the needs accordingly in their counties.

Leaders in Rural Recreation

The County Work Department of the International Committee regrets to announce the resignation of Dr. J. B. Modisett, who, October first, becomes the General Secretary at Milwaukee. Dr. Modisett's short connection with County Work endeared him to the entire brotherhood, and it was hoped that he would be able to continue the vigorous promotion of the health and recreation features of our program. It was discovered, however, that his health would not permit him to undertake the strain of travel involved in an International Secretaryship.

We are fortunate in the fact that